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Troop tallies were low, ex-CIA analyst says

NEW YORK (AP) — A former CIA analyst supported the CBS defense against Gen. William C. Westmoreland's libel suit yesterday, saying the agency refused to stand by its convictions in preparing estimates on enemy troop strength in Vietnam.

Now a partner in a Salt Lake City law firm, said he resigned from the CIA after the agency accepted figures on enemy strength that Mr. Parry and other analysts considered far too low.

"I believed that the truth had become political, that it didn't matter what the truth was, that it was how you packaged it," Mr. Parry said. He resigned in 1969, a year after the Tet offensive by communist forces took American leaders by surprise and nearly two years after the estimates in question became official.

He became the third CIA veteran to support the network against Gen. Westmoreland as the trial of the general's

\$120 million lawsuit moved into its 16th week in U.S. District Court.

"The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception," broadcast in 1982, charged that Gen. Westmoreland suppressed information showing higher-than-expected enemy strength in late 1967 in order to maintain political support for the war. Gen. Westmoreland commanded U.S. forces in Southeast Asia from 1964 to 1968.

The suit by Gen. Westmoreland, 70, says the show falsely accused him of deceiving his superiors — including President Lyndon B. Johnson — and denies that any information was suppressed.

Mr. Parry's testimony centered on a dispute in the summer of 1967 between analysts at the CIA, who urged that a forthcoming "special national intelligence estimate" put communist strength

at 500,000, and Gen. Westmoreland's Saigon staff, which supported figures at or less than 300,000. The CIA eventually agreed to exclude enemy "self-defense" forces from the estimate, thus removing more than 100,000 fighters from the count and paving the way for an eventual report of 242,000.

"I believed that the CIA were cowards because they wanted to conform, because they didn't have the courage to stand up for their convictions," testified Mr. Parry, who worked on the estimates at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va.

"We knew what the truth was. . . . We were refusing to count a substantial portion of the enemy we were fighting."

Even after the Tet offensive, when the CIA revised its estimates upward, Gen. Westmoreland's command refused to agree to the changes, Mr. Parry said.

"They were using their policy objectives to define the truth, rather than using the truth to define their objectives," he testified.

On cross-examination, Mr. Parry conceded that he had never visited Vietnam, that he was not personally acquainted with Gens. Joseph McChristian or Phillip Davidson, who had been Gen. Westmoreland's intelligence chiefs in 1967 and 1968, and that he never met Gen. Westmoreland himself before coming to court to begin his testimony Thursday.

Testimony favorable to CBS has previously come from Sam Adams, the former analyst who first raised charges against Gen. Westmoreland, became a consultant on the broadcast and is a co-defendant in the suit, and from George Allen, Mr. Adams' mentor at the CIA and one of several former officials who appeared on the broadcast. Mr. Parry did not appear on the program.